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BULLETIN

OF THE

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

(ENTRY AS SECOND CLASS MATTER PENDING)

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OUR OBJECT

WILLIAM COOLIDGE LANE

Chairman A. L. A. Publishing Board

THIS first number of a Bulletin of the American Library Association marks, it is hoped, the beginning of a closer connection between the Association and its members. The regular issue of such a Bulletin four or six times a year, or perhaps oftener if needed, would make it possible for the executive officers to communicate at frequent stated periods with members, and to keep them informed of action taken by the several boards and committees of the Association in the intervals between meetings.

For many years the chief function of the Association was to provide annually a meeting-place for librarians at some convenient point, and to stimulate interest in library matters by conventions now in one place and now in another, in different parts of the country. State and local associations, which have sprung from the interest and enthusiasm aroused by these meetings, now hold similar gatherings, which for many of their members serve the same purpose that was served by the earlier meetings of the American Library Association. Relying on these local associations to care for library interests, each in its own field, the general association in its present work may properly emphasize its national character. It will still provide, as no state or inter-state body can do, an annual convention, which shall bring together librarians from all parts of the United States and Canada. By means of its Publishing Board it can issue booklists, indexes, and manuals, which will be of general use throughout the country. Through its committees, it can gather information in regard to important subjects from every state, and present the result of these general surveys in reports which will reach all its members. It can give special attention to fostering library interests in those sections of the

country in which state commissions or state associations are still wanting, and it can keep all librarians posted as to the work which is being accomplished by the various state organizations.

To accomplish any of these results in a systematic manner, it requires a local habitation, a central office, to which inquiries or appeals for help may be addressed, and from which advice, instruction, and encouragement may issue forth. Most of its work of this kind is done through correspondence, hence it makes little difference where these headquarters are located, whether in Boston, New York, Washington, Chicago, or San Francisco. The main point is to determine where the conditions for carrying on such work are most favorable, where the most convenient accommodations can be secured, and where the best counsel is available.

With the opening of headquarters, and with the enlargement of the Association's activities thus made possible, a Bulletin, to be issued at regular intervals as a means of communication, becomes an essential part of the plan. This Bulletin should contain reports of the meetings of the Council and of the Executive Board of the Association; information in regard to the publications and plans of the Publishing Board; reports from standing committees appointed by the Association to gather information in regard to special subjects; early announcement of the meetings of the Association and of arrangements for attending them; and whatever else relates to the work of the Association. It may also usefully contain information in regard to the publications and progress of the state commissions and the state associations, since these commissions are generally willing to send their publications to anyone outside the state to whom they would be useful.

Each member of the Library Association is properly entitled to receive information of this kind regularly and without expense. It should be part of the return which he gets for his annual payment. Moreover, the Association will find itself more valued by its members if each member is kept informed of what it is doing, so that he may know what help he may profitably ask for, how and where to apply for help, and how to direct others to apply for it.

Such a Bulletin, however, may be compiled with care, may be published frequently, and may be mailed to every member, but it will fail of accomplishing its purpose, unless those to whom it is sent will make a point of *reading it*, and will regard it as a message addressed personally to each one. If it contains requests for information; if it asks for annual reports and bulletins, for plans, or for administrative blanks; if it requests members to send in their annual dues, without having bills sent out to them individually (an expensive process), each member is asked to regard the request as made personally and individually to him, and to respond to it as promptly as he would to a written letter enclosed under a two cent stamp. With cooperation of this kind from the members of the Association, the Bulletin will be of inestimable value to the officers in performing the duties which are placed upon them, and to the members in helping them to gain the full value of their membership.

Will you make it a point to read this Bulletin and to keep yourself informed in regard to the affairs of the A. L. A.?